

BENEFICIARY

TIPS

RELOCATION:

TIPS FOR MANAGING A SMOOTH MOVE

Moving from one location to another can be very stressful. Military families move more often than most others. While each family member reacts in different ways to the change a move brings, there are some common experiences most people have. These include feelings of anxiety, loss, pain, anger and isolation. A move can be physically and emotionally taxing for everyone. How a family prepares for a move determines how stressful the experience will be.

In dual career families, the relocation of one spouse often involves sacrificing the career of the other. Children are uprooted from friends and school. Adult children caring for elderly parents must make decisions about a parent's care. In a separation/divorce situation, the non-custodial parent's visitation arrangements will change. This tip sheet offers some suggestions on how to handle some of these challenges.

STAGES OF THE RELOCATION PROCESS:

- Pre-move/Preparation Stage - During this stage, people may feel overwhelmed and out of control. Their emotions may range from anxiety and depression to enthusiasm and feelings of well-being.
- Actual Move and Early Post-Move Stage - People may suppress their emotions as they focus on completing the necessary logistical arrangements.
- Post-Move Adjustment, Stage One - The emotional reactions and stress of adjustment may show up at this point. These may include feelings of isolation, anger, and depression.
- Post-Move Adjustment, Stage Two - Individuals gradually come to terms with and accept the move.

ADJUSTING TO RELOCATION:

- Maintain open communication with your spouse and family. Be aware of each person's own emotional needs and fears. Offer support and patience.
- Recognize that you will experience some losses - friendships, familiar job and routine, as well as letting go of your home to move to a new one.
- Prepare mentally for the move and make time to say goodbye to the people, places, and things that will be missed. Plan an evening out at your favorite restaurant or visit a place of special importance.

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- Look for positive aspects of the move - better assignment for the service member, an opportunity to see new sights or a chance to live in a better climate.
- Get organized. Make checklists of things to be done. Sort items to set aside for the movers and those to hand carry. Remember to list items of importance for the children.
- Be aware that reduced family income caused by the loss of a spouse's job may add to the strain of moving. Make plans well in advance to prepare for this time. Remember, no matter what the military may pay for, there are still expenses that may crop up unexpectedly during a move.
- Take advantage of opportunities and support offered by the new military community. Visit your Family Services/Support Center to get information or maps. You might even borrow or rent some essential household items until your boxes arrive.
- Don't try to unpack in one day. Take some time to get out and explore. Visit the library (a good place to pick up material on things to do and places to go), subscribe to the local newspaper, and knock on a neighbor's door to introduce yourself.
- Be positive! Look at the move as another adventure, a chance to meet new people, make new friends, face new challenges and experience yet another exciting facet of being part of the military family.

TIPS FOR MOVING WITH CHILDREN

- Tell children about the upcoming move to allow them time to get used to the idea, and for farewells. Help them collect memories - photographs, addresses, autograph books - from the friends they are leaving behind.
- Learn about the new location and talk to the children about it before the move. Visit the library for information. Your Family Services/Support Center has welcome packets for most assignment locations. You can also write or call the Chamber of Commerce in your new location.
- Explain the process of moving to young children, especially if they will be present moving day. Explain that packers will put everything into boxes, and a big truck will take it all to your new home. Talk about how much fun it will be to open up the boxes later.
- Allow each child to pack a small bag or backpack with a few special possessions and favorite games for the trip.
- Most importantly, talk about the move and have a positive attitude. Treat it as an adventure and the children will reflect your mood.



Prevention and Wellness Department
 931 S. Semoran Blvd. Suite 218
 Winter Park, Florida 32792
 telephone: (407) 673-5854